

National Elk Refuge News – June 15, 2006

Bike to Work Day



The bicycle rack at the National Elk Refuge Headquarters seldom sits unused.

June 22, 2006 is designated as *Bike to Work Day* in Jackson Hole, but for several Federal employees at the National Elk Refuge, it's just another day of using pedal power to get to the office.

Governor Dave Freudenthal proclaimed June as Wyoming Bike Month. Jackson's Friends of Pathways, together with the Wyoming Department of Transportation, have joined the Governor in encouraging increased awareness of bicycling transportation and safety issues by holding several local events during the week of June 18-24, including Thursday's *Bike to Work Day* celebration.

Refuge Manager Barry Reiswig is no stranger to the local bike path

system. Reiswig frequently rides his road bike to work during the summer months, making the 27-mile round trip trek from his home south of Jackson. In addition to the benefits of exercise and savings in fuel, Reiswig enjoys the wildlife.



Reiswig enjoys the views and the cool morning air during his commute.

"I'd rather watch ospreys and eagles than bumpers and oncoming traffic," he stated. "It's an inspiring way to start the day."

Lori Iverson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, rarely drives to work. An active cyclist, Iverson rides her bike to work rain or shine during the summer season. She also makes frequent trips during the day from the Refuge Headquarters to the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center across town, preferring to cycle whenever possible. She negotiates the sometimes heavy traffic by riding defensively, using hand signals and obeying all traffic signs. "I get there almost as quickly and enjoy myself way more than if I drove," she explained. "And I get lots of smiles from passersby. I think they know I'm having fun."



Though Lori hopes to log 1,000 miles on her road bike this summer, it's her trusty 9-year old mountain bike that gets her to and from work each day. "We're like old friends," she said.

Administrative Assistant Ketti Spomer lives 37 miles away in the neighboring town of Alpine, making it too far to bicycle each day. However, she leaves her mother's old cruiser bike at work, using it to run office errands around town. "My parents bought a matching pair of Free Spirit bicycles when they got married in 1969. The cushy seat and wind in my face make it a high point in my day," said Spomer.



Ketti returns to the office after a quick trip to the post office.

Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center Manager Kristen Gilbert is also the owner of a cruiser bicycle. Though she usually walks to work, her new Schwinn Cruiser SS gives her a sleek alternative.

Carol Cunningham, a Technical Writer/Editor for the National Park Service, is stationed at the National Elk Refuge Headquarters while she works on a joint Bison and Elk Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She commutes by bicycle twice a week from her home five miles away. "Before this project, I spent lots of time hiking while working in the field. Now I'm at a desk for most of the day, so I really enjoy the fresh air and exercise."

Geneva Chong is a U.S. Geological Survey employee who also shares office space at the Refuge Headquarters and tries to cycle as often as her schedule allows. Chong is an accomplished athlete who enjoys squeezing in exercise whenever she can. On the days she has more gear than her backpack can hold, she hooks up her Burley

bike trailer so she can still travel to work without having to use her car.

Steve and Sara Miller, fourth year volunteers on the Refuge, purchased bicycles this spring after being inspired by the number of cyclists on the staff. "Sara bought a helmet, but I had decided I didn't need one," Steve explained. "But when one of my supervisors showed up at a potluck on her bicycle wearing a helmet, I rethought my decision," Miller said with a smile. "Now I have a helmet, too." The Millers look forward to learning more about the area pathways this summer.



Steve and Sara Miller – both with helmets!

The Refuge staff plans to rendezvous at Pearl Street Bagels in Jackson on Thursday for free bagels, coffee and a bike tune from Teton Cycle Works as part of the week's celebration.

Happy *Bike to Work Day*, National Elk Refuge.